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THE PHILIPPINES: ANOTHER VIETNAM?

GABRIEL KOLKO

RLES SEMINARY

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THE NON-ENCYCLICAL
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NEWS & VIEWS

Sunday, December 17

It was a Sunday for contrasts. The Paris peace talks had broken down the day before. Front pages were ablaze with Henry Kissinger accusing the North Vietnamese of "procedures that can only mock the hopes of humanity." American bombers were revving up, under Nixon orders, for the new terror-bombing of North Vietnam. It was Sunday, Dec. 17.

Pope Paul, "at once sad and bitter," stepped to the window of his Vatican apartment for his noontime blessing of the crowd in St. Peter's Square below. "We have been waiting for peace in the Far East, as a human gift worthy of the Feast of Christmas. Instead, it has been announced to the world that peace still is not ripe," he exclaimed. "It is sad. Bitterness invades our heart as a result of this delay."

At the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, Episcopal lay theologian William Stringfellow took the pulpit for an Advent sermon and likened the Nixon Administration to the Antichrist that Christians saw in the Roman Empire.

"It is the radical dehumanization of society by war, by apartheid and by persistent official aggressions against the rights of human beings that justifies comparison of the United States with first-century Rome," said Stringfellow, "and which prompts Christians to discern in the incumbent American regime the same spirit of the Antichrist which Christians in the primitive church exposed and opposed in the Roman state."

He went on: "We know too well what happened in the earliest persecutions, as well as from what has happened in Nazism and in Stalinism, that in the end the Antichrist, incarnate in the state, usurps and seeks to displace the church of Christ. And that is the role which the Nixon Administration is assuming with arrogance and blasphemy worthy of Nero or Domitian."

Meanwhile, at the White House, the Sunday morning religious service featured the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Philadelphia's Cardinal Krol, preaching to the President of the United States and 325 invited guests.

The setting was perfect, and expectation worth cultivating. After all, Krol has been known as something of a peace-man since the last Bishops' Synod. Now he had the opportunity to lay it on the line before the highest councils of state and the President himself. He didn't.

Out came the clichés: "For us to profess faith in God without hastening to eliminate the indignities inflicted upon men would be but empty rhetoric . . ."

Out came the flag: "This three-pillared religious foundation has been and must continue to be an acknowledged basis of American society. The authority of God is recognized in the title of Creator with which our Declaration of Independence describes him; the love of God is acknowledged in that same document in recognition of the endowments he has given man and in the celebration of that day which most closely approaches a national holy day, Thanksgiving; the will of God is acknowledged in the meticulous care which we take to respect human rights, because this is recognition both of God's transcendent authority and of his generous love."

The irrelevancies continued for 20 minutes . . . and the leadership of the American church sank lower.

Five days later on Dec. 22, Cardinal Krol did speak out, deploring the bombing and asking a return to the negotiating table. But, by then, so had everyone. More particularly, he had squandered his audience.

Nixon's Appointees

You expect publications like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* to dissent on Richard Nixon's new Cabinet and high echelon choices, but not *The Economist*, Britain's conservative, hawkish weekly. It's as American as Trish' and Julie and Dave and Whatshisname.

But, what do you know, *The Economist* has taken a dim view of many Nixon appointees through its Dec. 16 edition.

Claude Brinegar, the new man at Transportation, is described as a man who "knows a great deal" about oil and fast cars, and not much more. He's Union Oil's gift to the country.

James Lynn, who takes over at Housing and Urban Development, is put down as a man with "no experience" for the job and who, like Brinegar, can be "expected to do what the White House wants."

Frederick Dent at Commerce is quickly dismissed as "a textile manufacturer from South Carolina who enjoys the recommendation of President Nixon's old ally in Southern politics, Senator Strom Thurmond."

Peter Brennan at Labor is cited as the "hard-hat" who "deserted the Democrats and voted for Mr. Nixon," and whose appointment is not altogether appreciated by trade unionists.

Finally, *The Economist* notes that "the man who will now argue the Administration's cases before the Supreme Court"—Robert Bork—"is in tune with President Nixon's conservative views about the role of the courts." That, however, does not seem to be much of a problem for *The Economist*.

Odds and Ends

—The *Pittsburgh Catholic* is advertising "for the collector" a Royal Tettau dinner plate "dedicated to His Holiness Pope John XXIII." Cost: $100 each. If you rush, you can still pick up the one of Pope Paul from last year. Also $100 ea. Wonder what differentiates this religious gimmickry from the rosaries of yesterday with drops of Lourdes water in each bead?

—Our critic's judgment on the rock musical *Virgin* (in case anyone's wondering why we didn't review it): "It was earnest, unsophisticated and out of place; it meant no harm and should be allowed to pass quietly." It did, in early December.

JOHN DEEDY

Seles, *Magyar Szo*, Yugoslavia

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CORRESPONDENCE

Married Singles

Unadilla, N. Y.

To the Editors: Hurrah for Kennedy [Nov. 10] for putting Dr. Fontinell's principles into a Christian (vs. a "church") context. Hurrah for Steinfels and Zeik for putting those principles into specifics.

Popes, bishops, priests—in short the "official church"—are not necessarily equatable with the Church, much less with total sweep of catholic Christendom. This equation is an assumption which seems to color all of Dr. Fontinell's thoughts.

What Dr. Fontinell is suggesting is what Marriage Encounter refers to as "married singles," and it just does not work. As a pastor who has a steady procession of "married singles" through my office, I would suggest that Dr. Fontinell take time out for a Marriage Encounter weekend—or a couple of weeks in any parish office trying to put back together the Humpty Dumpty pieces of individuals torn apart by the tension that comes from trying to maintain "a sustained relationship which is not sexually exclusive."

(REV.) WILLIAM L. DAY

Berkeley, Ca.

To the Editors: I agree with Eugene Fontinell's modest proposals concerning the church and sexuality [Nov. 10]. There are a number of starting points: biblical, moral and theological, from which a new understanding of divorce can be had. Moreover, on sexual exclusivity Fontinell's critics stress only the possible pitfalls and abuses. None of them, with the possible exception of Fr. Springer, seems able to appreciate the positive potential both for the primary couple and their friends under the right circumstances. I have the feeling that the subject is too threatening to the critics to allow them to entertain a constructive view of less exclusive sex.

I was somewhat surprised that no one in this exchange noted the im-

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THE NON-ENCYCLICAL

The question of the Papacy and the Jews before and during World War II will not die. According to a story in the Dec. 15 *National Catholic Reporter,* Pius XI commissioned Father John La Farge, S.J., to draft an encyclical attacking racism and anti-Semitism in June of 1938, eight months before the Pope's death and 15 months before the outbreak of World War II. Whether or not the ailing Pope ever saw the draft of the proposed encyclical is not known; what is known is that the project was not continued under Pius XII. Would publication of an encyclical specifically condemning racism and anti-Semitism have accomplished anything? As far as the race question is concerned, there is little doubt that such a document would have strengthened the hand of Catholics working for interracial justice in this country. As for the more crucial state of the Jews in Europe, Gordon Zahn, who probably knows as much about the situation as any man, thinks an explicit encyclical would have helped. "Nazi anti-Semitic practices would not have stopped," Zahn writes in *NCR*, "but they may not have escalated to the stage of planned extermination; more important, Catholics in countries soon to be occupied might have been less ready to cooperate when the time came."

"Less ready to cooperate . . ."—the phrasing is chilling. Yet there is no evading the past; it is true that many Christians were all-too-ready to cooperate in the persecution of the Jews, and it is this fact, even more than the silence of Pius XII, that stains the collective conscience of Christians. History is dealing harshly with Pius XII on this issue, and rightly so, but on this side of the Atlantic as well as the other he was not alone in keeping silence. Perhaps things are different now, but the underlying truth is that for centuries we who are Christians received what Jules Isaac called a certain "instruction in contempt" as far as the Jews were concerned, and this helped to prepare the way for Hitler's war on them. The notion that a divine curse rested on Israel was a malevolent legend, but it found its way into many respectable Christian manuals and Scripture commentaries. Can anyone imagine that Christians would remain uncontaminated by such poison? In point of fact, they did not. From the days of Constantine until the French Revolution the Jews were treated as a people scorned and set apart. Periodic persecution was the rule, and finally, under Hitler, six

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million Jews died in concentration camps and gas chambers in the heart of Christian Europe. This horror, Hitler's "final solution," was possible only because the Nazi onslaught was carried out in a climate of opinion prepared by centuries of hostility toward the Jewish people, with the Nazi pestilence spreading among people fatally weakened by chronic and virulent anti-Semitism. Only in this context can the success of Hitler be explained.

In all this it was not the Gospel that was at fault, but there is no doubt that a slanted way of preaching the Gospel contributed substantially to anti-Semitism among Christians. As Father Gregory Baum has noted, in Christian commentary Jesus and Mary and his apostles somehow even became "less Jewish" than Judas and those who helped to send Jesus to his death. When the Fathers of Vatican II took up the matter, therefore, they confronted and condemned the central historic, destructive myth: that the Jews are an "accursed" race because of their role in the Crucifixion. Christian teaching holds that all of us individually and together are by our sins responsible for Christ's death, but those who held to the "curse" myth placed the blame for the death of Jesus exclusively on the Jews, all Jews, living and dead. Many who believed this perverted tale thought that the Jews, because of their part in the Crucifixion, were condemned to wander homeless through the world till the end of time—a notion so strong that some Christians feared that the establishment of the State of Israel somehow contradicted Sacred Scripture. Many clearly persuaded themselves that by persecuting the Jews they were doing a special service to God. All of this, it should perhaps be emphasized, was popular belief, not Catholic doctrine, and this was what was reaffirmed by Vatican II. The official teaching of the church, enunciated by the Council, is that the Jews were not and are not cast away, and the church condemns efforts to blame all Jews for Christ's death, either those then alive or those alive today. The children of Israel are not seen as rejected or cursed by God; on the contrary, they are cherished by him, and in Catholic thought the Jews will always be objects of God's love in a special way. It is this central view that should inspire Christian homilies, publications and contacts, both official and unofficial, with our Jewish fellow-citizens. The story is told of Pope John that he greeted

Permanent Deacons: A Lesser Caste?

There are about a thousand permanent deacons in the Roman church since that order was restored a few years ago, says the *New York Times*. Furthermore, the *National Catholic Reporter* advises us, there are many more in training than have been ordained. About a thousand Americans are present or potential deacons, and a good number are expected to follow. The initial signs appear to be hopeful for the implementation of this ministerial form which is at once ancient and innovative.

However, I suggest, there is a good chance that the church, at least in the U.S., is in for a rather sorry "instant replay" of the abortive "lay apostolate" movement that gained momentum after World War II and ebbed shortly after Vatican Council II. The movement to involve lay people in leadership roles within the church (save those reserved explicitly to priests) seemed a great thing at first. But it became dangerous when some lay people could perform many a task better than their clerical predecessors could. And despite all the protestations to the contrary, we found many a priest not wanting to give up his administrative job, his professorial post, his role in parish organizations, or the editorship of a Catholic publication. The layman was only supposed to help out in his spare time—like the usher at the 12:15—but not to make any decisions or to have any real power. In the latter years of the past decade, we saw parish after parish refuse to hire a lay religious educator on a full-time basis, opting instead the nice lady from the neighborhood who had little time and less preparation; she wouldn't rock the parochial boat. Likewise, we saw the layman invited out of college theology, on a grand scale, almost as quickly as he had been invited in. Finally, even many "parish councils" and "committee" efforts on the grass-roots level have degenerated into labyrinthine ways for the pastor to work his will in even the most trivial and non-sacerdotal facets of Catholic community life.

A host of sociologists and other commentators have second-guessed the situation: in decades past, ordination (or religious vows) tended to be the only vehicle to ascendancy in the pyramid of the Catholic subculture. Holy Orders, poverty, chastity and obedience rode on the coattails of many a vocation to education, nursing, administration, journalism, or another form of ecclesial leadership having nothing to do, in essence, with priesthood or religious-order life as such. Later, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the active layman—replete with support from the official church—had seemed to find a shortcut, and many a cleric felt threatened, if not cheated. In such a light, an ecclesiastical backlash was as predictable as it was despicable.

Now the pundits wonder if we will fare any better

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a group of Jewish visitors by throwing wide his arms in welcome and exclaiming, "I am Joseph, your brother." This is, of course, the essential truth that should animate all Christian-Jewish relations; if Father La Farge's unused encyclical can still help to spread that spirit, it will have done good work, late as it is and published or not.

KIDDING AROUND RULES

The endless Vietnam events seem to be draining the American people of indignation and capacities for response, but thankfully there remain residues of concern for incidents such as those involving Gordon W. Rule. Rule is the Navy civilian official who went before a Joint Congressional Economic Subcommittee and criticized the appointment of Roy L. Ash to head the Office of Management and Budget. Ash, a former defense contractor, headed Litton Industries, a firm with a startling history of cost overrun. Rule termed his appointment a mistake for Mr. Nixon and the acceptance a "worse mistake" for Ash. The consequence was the appearance of Navy chief of matériel Admiral Isaac Kidd at Rule's apartment where Rule was sick in bed, and a demand that Rule resign. Rule refused and was summarily demoted from director of the Navy's procurement control to consultant to a supply school.

The action reeks of harassment and vindictiveness, and is the intolerable sort of thing that prompted then-Senator Nixon to remark in 1951: "Unless protection is given to witnesses who are members of the armed forces or employes of the government, [Congressional] hearings will amount to no more than a parade of yes men for the Administration policies as they exist." Further, it is the precise pressure that Title 18 of the United States Code seeks to guard against, with penalties of five years' imprisonment and $5000 fine.

The treatment dealt Rule has drawn protests from newspapers, Senators and Congressmen. But protest is not enough. The letter of the U.S. Code should be invoked and the intimidating party or parties (in the event Kidd was not acting on his own) should be prosecuted—not only in justice to Rule; not only for the protection of all Congressional witnesses; but also to impress on the Washington bureaucracy that intimidation will not be tolerated on any level of government.

in admission of married men to the permanent diaconate, to serve the People of God in myriad ways which will include preaching and the administration of some sacraments. I think not. Despite the earnest protestations of the church, it will too often appear an end-run around the priestly celibacy issue. Priesthood and diaconate will be seen by too many Catholics as distinct in terms of marital status and not in terms of their ministerial roles. This will likely create awful tensions between "married clergy" and "celibate clergy" who will preach, officiate, baptize and lead, with many Catholics making their choice between the two for their "real" clerical leadership. In this type of context, it is all too possible that many a deacon will perform many a function better than his priestly colleague. The danger will then become clear and present, and up will go the barricades, once more.

The astute established cleric who would prefer to see the boat unrocked will have to sabotage the diaconate, even subconsciously. This is already beginning, since the church seems eager to repeat the mistakes made with the "lay apostolate." Preliminary reports from many sectors indicate that diaconal candidates will often pay for the privilege of their training, but will almost always be expected to offer their services to the church gratis. Since permanent deacons will characteristically be married, and supporting their families at full-time "secular" jobs, this makes for a situation where a deacon can be frustrated out of office quite easily, while any cleric who would be wont to *do* the frustrating would enjoy the professional confidence and support of the church. One wonders how many men would be interested in long-term play against a stacked deck. Surely, the good soul who slices the ham for the Knights, or carries the flag in the Holy Name parade, would give freely of his time and labor to help Father baptize, to witness marriages without Nuptial Mass, to go to wakes on stormy nights, and perform other ecclesiastical errands. But people who are not docile enough are not apt to last in the permanent diaconate as it now appears to be shaping up.

If the church would see the permanent diaconate prosper in its own right, and not merely as cleanup crew for the priesthood, then the distinct ministry of diaconate will have to be supported by professional status, power and—concomitantly—the sort of recompense that enables a professional to function, even to the point of supporting some permanent married deacons on a full-time basis. That would be only a first step, of course. The permanent diaconate in the Roman church cannot really breathe freely until it is instantly distinguishable from the priesthood on the basis of something other than celibacy-as-requirement-or-not. But the second step cannot be taken if the first falters.

GEORGE DEVINE

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THE CENTER AND THE LEFT

MICHAEL NOVAK

In the Democratic Party, both the center and the left have serious problems. These problems are both political and spiritual.

The center has no credible body of future-oriented ideas toward which to point—or too few such ideas. It is also embarrassed by elderly but still-active leaders, who do not project a sense of forward movement, men like George Meany, Richard J. Daley and even Hubert Humphrey. That such leaders are in better touch with their people than George McGovern was has now been proved. But that they have ideas for bettering the lot of their people over the next ten or fifteen years is not at all plain.

The left prides itself on its ideas: its revisionist history of the cold war; its analysis of America as a destructive, imperial, capitalist power abroad, in the grip of a power elite at home; its moral identification with "victims" and the "oppressed"; its assault on *machismo*, competition, duty, and work, and its attachment to the pleasure principle; its aggressive secularism; its fierce bias against ordinary Americans. (For this kind of emotional and institutional reaction, I suppose we should have a name to set alongside racism, elitism, sexism and militarism. I propose classism. The left is classist in its contempt for small-town Protestants and urban Catholics and lower-class Jews.)

So many members of the new class, never quite attaining the public status they would like, are consumed with the very class resentment of which they accuse others. "America is sick," they say; "doesn't even know enough to die." In words sweating contempt from every pore, they describe the hatred, alienation and divisiveness of *other* Americans.

Many on the left write as Catholics used to, from a position of siege. There is a remarkable coincidence between the attitudes and practices of new left vis-à-vis America and that of Catholics of a generation ago. The dangers of secularism and materialism were never so effectively denounced by Cardinal Spellman as by Marcus Raskin. The established elites that link Harvard, the Council on Foreign Relations and foreign policy were never so soundly denounced by Father Ginder as by Richard Barnet. It is an opportune time for conservative Catholics to piggy-back on "radical" criticism without so much as a change of resentment. The wonder is that many liberal Catholics have been picking up the same cant.

But of course part of what the left says is true. Many of its facts, figures and interpretations about the distribution of power and the direction of self-interest in the United States are accurate enough. It is the philosophical *context* in which these findings are set, on the one hand, and the *class basis* they rationalize, on the other, that qualify them. Concentrations of power and interest mark every known society of the past and present. Societies are always "immoral," fall far short of "Paradise," of "the kingdom," of justice, liberty and truth. Societies fall short, not for accidental reasons, but for at least three reasons inherent in the human situation: scarcity of resources, the inequality of individual character, and the fallibility of the human heart. A fourth reason is more complicated in statement: it is difficult enough for one person to treat a single other with full sensitivity, complete insight and accurate fairness—to treat hundreds (or millions) of others so, as institutions must, is beyond human capacity. Given the inevitable grossness of institutional procedures, societies always operate by standards different from those of a personal morality.

Secondly, the dreams of a good society implicit in the writings of classists are not only illusory; they are also rationalizations of the interests of a new class, privileged in affluence, mobility and education, and undisciplined by the need to acquire or to administer wealth and power. The new class has a parasitic status. That status is the root of its anxieties and feelings of guilt. For its own hedonism, leisurely life and room to think, it is utterly dependent on a society of abundance produced by the labor of others.

The class basis of the center and the left is so different that perhaps the Democratic party would be better served by dividing, into two parties. As a family's affluence went up, so (according to the polls) did the probability of its support for McGovern. Many old, comfortable families that used to lead the northeastern Republican establishment are now to be found supporting the "new politics"—John Lindsay and Ogden Reid are merely the public tip of the iceberg. ("The Greening of America", after all, appeared in the *New Yorker*.) Then there is the "new wealth" generated by the new technologies since World War II; thence, "radical chic."

The class basis of the center of the party is the urban working class —that 75 percent of the population whose income is below $15,000 per year. Militant media-oriented blacks tend to side with the left; but most black leaders and people seem far more comfortable with the center—with Hubert Humphrey, for example, rather than George McGovern. In terms of class perception and long-range interest, this preference makes sense.

Many Americans dislike the term-

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THE PHILIPPINES: ANOTHER VIETNAM?

GABRIEL KOLKO

The Nixon Administration is on the horns of a dilemma

THE HISTORIC relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines today gives an exceptional importance to the massive economic and strategic legacy of over 70 years of American domination of that nation. Apart from its prime significance to the future of American military power in Asia after the Indochina debacle, the Philippines is the most important example of a sustained U.S. effort to transform a Third World country in its own image. Now, with a martial-law regime's fate very much in doubt and the U.S.'s economic investments and military bases all hanging in the balance, the objective pressures for a potentially open-ended American commitment to preserve its interests and credibility in yet one more Asian nation are again re-emerging in a form substantially more compulsive than those in Indochina before 1965.

The economic stakes for the U.S. in the Philippines begin with a minimum of $2 billion in investments. This sum, which averages an 18 percent annual return, accounted at the end of 1970 for almost four-fifths of the foreign investment in a country whose oil, manufacturing, commerce and mining sectors are heavily foreign-owned. In addition, the 1971 trade between the two nations came to an impressive $835 million. This comprehensive domination is due largely to the postwar economic treaties, particularly the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1954, which allow Americans alone among foreigners to possess complete control of a firm in any industry.

To Washington, the 18,400 U.S. military personnel in two major and six minor bases are "a fundamental element in the U.S. security posture in the Western Pacific," as one Administration spokesman put it last June. Subic Bay Naval Base, the home port of the 7th Fleet, is considered as "tremendously important," as well it might be. Subic's vast munitions and repair center makes it one of the prime bases in the war. From Clark Air Force Base, B-52's are being refueled in the air, planes are rotating to Vietnam and even flying directly from North Vietnam back to Clark, and the technicians do a substantial part of the mechanical work for the air war.

Since 1969 the responsible U.S. authorities have never denied the role their military forces could play in present and, above all, future local counterinsurgency operations. "There is no identifiable conventional force that is likely or capable of invading the Philippines," Lt. Gen. George Seignious admitted to the House Appropriations Committee last June. "The danger in the Philippines comes from smuggling, from insurgencies, that are of considerable concern not only to the Filipinos themselves, but to the security of our bases." In the 22 months after December 1967 the U.S. bases served as supply and support depots, even to the extent of air support missions with American pilots, in at least nine admitted instances of anti-guerrilla operations. If the Philippines were ever to evolve into a new Vietnam, the Administration sees the formidable equipment and manpower already in place as of inestimable value, if only because it would not have to take the politically most difficult first step of creating bases. Since nominal Filipino independence in 1946, in every sense the U.S. has already systematically intervened in that nation as part of a normal order of things that began being seriously challenged during the late 1960s.

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The Marcos government in 1970 and again in 1972 ran up enormous balance of payments deficits that only further put the nation in hock to largely U.S.-owned or -controlled banks.

Well might American leaders worry about potential insurgency, for Filipino society is in a prerevolutionary stage of deepening social, economic and political chaos without having yet developed a unified opposition.

During its nearly half-century rulership of the Philippines, the U.S. helped fashion one of the most inequitable and impoverished agrarian structures in all of Asia, and an originally spontaneous agrarian revolutionary movement on the main island of Luzon during World War II came under superficial Communist control in the form of the main anti-Japanese resistance, the Huks. With massive U.S. aid, Manila was largely able to suppress the Huks after the war, but the concentration of land ownership into fewer hands became even more pronounced. In 1965 Manila experts estimated that corruption consumed about one-third of government revenues, and inflation and the population explosion more than ate up modest economic growth. The gross maldistribution of wealth did nothing to mitigate an unemployment rate in 1964 of about one-tenth of the work force, plus underemployment for almost one-third of the remainder —peasants who worked perhaps three months a year, or the massive new urban poor forced off the land to live a lumpen existence in vast slums. The two main parties, the Liberals and the Nationalists, were traditionally interchangeable personalities and largely rival personal cliques drawn from the immensely wealthy tiny urban and landowning class.

When Nationalist Ferdinand E. Marcos became President in December 1965, Western papers hailed him as the "last chance" for stemming revolution in the Philippines. Apart from the grave economic problems facing him, it was widely felt that Marcos would also have to please a new class of local entrepreneurs that had begun to emerge in the postwar era—relatively conservative interests that wanted more protection from U.S. domination as well as sufficient development of a social and economic infrastructure so that they could themselves profit from the resources of the potentially rich island nation. These advocates of greater social rationality were scarcely leftists, but they created an extremely important new, essentially anti-American, imperative and social force which, along with the agrarian problem, intersected with the inherited poverty and corruption that continued to evolve toward social chaos.

But Marcos chose the traditional route of corruption and inefficiency. Initially a man of moderate wealth, he soon became one of the ten richest taxpayers on a salary less than an American postman's, and he and his ambitious wife's family diversified into every conceivable type of new enterprise his power made available. He allowed a 1963 land reform law only to aggravate the conditions of the handful of small peasants who had tried to exercise its provisions. Unemployment and underemployment have increased, and this year experts projected the 39 million population to double in 21 years in a nation in which estimates of per capita income range from $140 to $180. With less than half of the taxes of the rich being collected, chronic inflation and unequal economic development, in 1971 this agrarian country was forced to import nearly a half-million tons of rice. The nation's foreign debt, which was a mere $88 million in 1955, by April 1972 had mushroomed to $2.2 billion, while debt servicing of the principal absorbed over 20 percent of export earnings. Beyond this, most of the debt falls due within the next three years. Buffeted by fluctuations in world prices for its main exports and its own ineptness, compounded by the normally great repatriation of the profits of American investors, the Marcos government in 1970 and during the first seven months of 1972 ran up enormous balance of payments deficits that only further put the nation in hock to largely U.S.-owned or -controlled banks. Perhaps most dangerous of all in mobilizing the opposition, in 1970 the rate of inflation doubled over the average of the preceding decade, and that leap was in turn more than doubled in 1971.

This was the larger structural context Marcos confronted after his reelection in 1969 in a campaign that is estimated to have absorbed a good part of the national treasury and weakened the peso. The challenge to him from the Left remained remarkably small. The Huks, which for social as well as economic and other reasons have always retained a small following in central Luzon, were divided among essentially Mafia-type social bandits—some of whom had supported Marcos in 1969—and spawned a political "army" that was pro-Russian. The Maoists, drawing on the large Manila student unemployed and alienated, entered the field with the New People's Army (NPA) and the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) in 1968. In late 1969, U.S. intelligence thought Manila's estimate of 900 armed men in all these factions, with their mass base at 30,000 to 80,000, to be rather high. During the next three years these numbers changed only slightly.

By far the greater immediate threat to Marcos—and to American interests—came from the nationalist constituency in the oligarchy with its quiet distinctive class

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basis for its anti-American political rhetoric. Added to this key class was the emergence of a large and rapidly growing Catholic Left within the lower clergy and laity in Manila and among the peasantry after 1968, a major division in a church that historically had been the bastion of reaction.

Since the constitution forbade Marcos to run for a third term after December 1973, and his Nationalist party had already lost badly in the November 1971 congressional election, by last summer it appeared likely that the normal parliamentary mechanisms in the Philippines might challenge American power much sooner than the guerrillas. Marcos himself, whose only real consistency has been to enrich his family fortunes, developed no coherent response to his dilemmas, but was to cater verbally to nationalist sentiment while in reality pursuing the traditional comprador role of servicing American needs. Hamlet-like wavering became his hallmark. Frequent references were made by himself and his advisers after 1966 to the need for martial law to confront the problems of society via a mélange of agrarian reform and thought control, but the press and his critics saw these only as a symptom of his overweening ambition to retain power, and such threats were not taken seriously enough. In fact, complete personal opportunism is Marcos' most consistent personal characteristic, with a pseudo-intellectual cast of mind which he adjusts to serve his own needs.

Marcos Seeks a Way

Confronted with a multiplicity of unprecedented challenges as well as a serious opposition, Marcos after 1970 pursued several simultaneous but also quite contradictory responses—the cooption and repression of his adversaries. Each of them, by necessity, had quite different but also quite fundamental and dangerous implications to the United States in a land in which every major policy necessarily involves relations with the colonial power.

First, towards the Left and the nationalists he probed to determine whether the traditional opportunism of the dissident oligarchy and middle classes might produce a cooptive solution. This took the form of vague declarations on such questions as the future of U.S. bases and economic privileges, the alliance with the U.S. in Southeast Asia, and even future relations with Russia and China.

In part the new Manila foreign policy rhetoric was a byproduct of the ambiguities of the Nixon Doctrine as well as a "ping pong" diplomacy which superficially cast doubt on the assumptions of SEATO. From late 1971 and until this summer, Manila officials frequently explored publicly the desirability of a great powers' guarantee of a neutralized Southeast Asia which might even result in the end of SEATO and the elimination of U.S. bases in the Philippines. If Marcos added sufficient contingencies to his statements to allow him complete fredom to act—which only caused cynics to suggest he was merely seeking leverage for greater American economic and military aid— it is clear that he was also adopting a more nationalist posture for the moment.

This pose was more apparent than real. With the vast escalation in Vietnam last spring, the vital role of Clark and Subic in the war became the focus of an opposition which began to unify nationalists, Christians and the entire Left around a common anti-war position. Liberal Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., one of the leading Liberal contenders for the Presidential nomination and scion of one of the main families in the oligarchy, then took up the issue with the assistance of other members of the nationalist opposition and, above all, the press. His charges were made irrefutable by evidence anti-war U.S. Navy and Air Force personnel provided. Then, in mid-May, two Air Force men active in the GI anti-war movement held a press conference in Manila and testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, providing graphic details. Though the GIs involved were all immediately shipped back to the U.S., Marcos went on the defensive and wobbled. He had during mid-May publicly accepted U.S. Ambassador Henry A. Byroade's assurances that the bases were not being used for offensive operations in the war, which violated the 1959 agreement covering their use, but unprecedented public anti-war opposition during May and June was not allayed and the press and Liberal opposition refused to drop the matter.

The bases controversy again focused Marcos' ire on the press. In a nation of 72 percent literacy, newspapers potentially play a unifying and educational role unparalleled in perhaps any other Third World nation because the biggest dailies and weeklies largely belong to nationalist oligarchs opposed to Marcos' commitments to the U.S. The press' political role was therefore of immense significance, for it gladly exposed official chicanery and lies.

At the beginning of June, Marcos' aides began pub-

Complete personal opportunism is Marcos' most consistent personal characteristic, along with a pseudo-intellectual cast of mind which he adjusts to serve his own needs.

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licly calling for vague revisions in the existing bases agreements, and even the return of some of the vast tracts of land attached to them—which neatly skirted the issue of the use of Clark and Subic in the war. Then, on June 12, Marcos released a declaration which raised the whole question of the future of the bases but avoided taking any position by simply asking for "a deep and speedy review of the bases and other military agreements as well as the Laurel-Langley agreement. . . ." Speeches of this sort, both American experts and Filipino nationalists concluded, were designed merely to improve Manila's horse-trading position on economic aid.

As part of his new exploration of foreign policy options, Marcos at the end of 1971 had mentioned the need to open greater contacts and trade with Russia and China, and shortly thereafter sent his powerful wife off to Moscow and his brother-in-law to Peking. Mrs. Marcos herself last May initiated a Philippines-Soviet Friendship Society, of which she is honorary chairlady, and in June official Soviet commentators were publicly praising Marcos' shift away from "a one-sided political orientation." Many cordial high-level exchange visits took place over this past summer, and Moscow's enthusiasm for Marcos' nationalist utterances became more audible as it ignored the question of the fate of the small underground pro-Soviet Communist party. Talks focused on trade and the establishment of normal diplomatic relations. Although China refused to go nearly so far, it too welcomed a semi-official Filipino economic delegation last July.

Both publicly and privately, U.S. interests saw the trend as profoundly disquieting. "We could wake up tomorrow and find a revolt under way—under the banner of nationalism," one "Western official" in Manila told *U.S. News and World Report* last May. This challenge reached alarming proportions on August 19 when the Philippines Supreme Court handed down several decisions which struck a profound blow at the whole web of past and future American investments. The rulings invalidated the Laurel-Langley Agreement provisions allowing full U.S. ownership of land, natural resources and public utilities, and demanded that American ownership be sold off or reduced to 40 percent by the time the treaty expires in July 1974. Worse yet from the U.S. viewpoint, no foreign directors might sit on the boards or manage such firms. The decisions, which were appealed and remained vague regarding compensation or possible means of circumventing them, were allegedly to affect less than one-quarter of U.S. investment, but Americans rightly saw it merely as a prelude to more nationalist legislation to follow.

Apart from what it meant to the existing penetration by the U.S., the new rulings smashed the single most important past and future American interest, as well as the politically most potent one—petroleum. One-fifth of U.S. investments in the Philippines are in oil marketing and refining, and since the late 1960s exploration throughout the islands and offshore areas has greatly intensified, with the promise of discoveries now considered excellent. Walter J. Levy, the U.S. industry's most famous specialist in Third World oil legislation, in 1969 personally drew up a secret recommendation to the Marcos government that would have thrown open future oil development to U.S. capital, but the Congress refused to pass new petroleum legislation, and last May nationalist political leaders and the press began to make much of Levy's role in Marcos' contemplated measures. The press had even begun to investigate reliable charges that the Marcos family itself has major oil development interests and ambitions, and yet another fortune to gain.

This equivocal juggling of foreign policies, which gained him time during which to attain his main goal of further enriching his own family and clique, inevitably had to exhaust itself when the question of the retention of Presidential power required a solution, and it came to a head this summer when catastrophic floods, with an estimated damage of over $300 million, threw the already teetering economy into a tailspin. Prices in Manila increased over one-quarter in one month, and the issue of the national foreign debt owed to largely U.S. interests joined with the critical need for additional food imports. "Time is growing short for the Philippines to make up its mind exactly what changes are going to be made in its business relationship with the United States," the businessmen's well-informed and costly *The Asia Letter* wrote in mid-September. "There's been lots of talk and plenty of table pounding going on about what alterations should be made."

According to an undenied report, 'Marcos promised to protect a $1 billion U.S. economic stake in the Philippines in return for a tacit U.S. approval of his declaration of martial law.'

Marcos since 1971 had probed coopting the nationalist movement and rhetoric and found it unprecedentedly intransigent, but at the same time he serviced the U.S. in the typical comprador role. Essentially, Marcos had lost control of the nation's economy and the people's commitments. By last September all that was left to him was even greater dependence on the U.S. and the more systematic utilization of the repression and violence he had also increasingly applied after 1970.

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Marcos and his closest advisers had often since 1966 discussed the possibility of martial law and an end to the nominal parliamentarianism that had always misruled the Philippines. Until 1971 few believed he would actually take the step. Moreover, the 60,000-man army retained an apolitical reputation which was undeserved. The military, despite a portion of it that is "apolitical" or even also in parts touched by nationalism, is potentially the U.S.' most reliable and powerful ally today. In the two decades after 1950 it sent 8,700 of its personnel to the U.S. for training, including 153 of its most senior officers. Virtually the entire police force was retrained and reorganized by U.S. police experts and funds in the years immediately after Marcos came to power. No instrument of repression in all of Asia was ever so completely Americanized. Brig. Gen. Fidel Ramos, the head of the notorious Philippines Constabulary, is a West Point graduate and a Fort Bragg-trained parachutist. Marcos' executive secretary, Alejandro Melchor, is an Annapolis graduate. If the military appeared dormant, the fact remains that in 1958 some Filipino officers, working with the CIA and American military advisers, had begun planning a coup until their plot was uncovered and the entire matter hushed up to avoid obvious mutual embarrassment. It only remained for circumstances to activate this liaison once again.

Marcos' advisers admitted at the end of September that martial law had been studied for "a long time," to quote the *New York Times*, but this is scarcely surprising. On August 21, 1971, nine people at a Liberal Party rally, including senatorial candidates, were killed by two grenades while many more were wounded. Marcos, blaming the Maoists, suspended habeas corpus until last January and arrested over a hundred opponents but never charged anyone with the crime. From that date onward Marcos repeatedly played up the "Communist threat," openly linked Aquino and the Liberal nationalists to it, and further deepened public skepticism and hostility toward himself. Beginning last March, petty explosions became common, with bombs being "uncovered" in the Congress and Foreign Affairs Ministry in July and August. On July 5th Marcos' authorities claimed to have discovered a boat that had been loaded with arms from an undisclosed foreign power intended for the Maoist New People's Army—an affair which again reduced his credibility. The pattern remained the same: "Communist" plots and actions in which no one was hurt or captured were used to justify some decisive action to rid the nation of that menace.

Marcos and his advisers were drafting amazingly public plans. At the end of August, amidst new charges that the NPA was infiltrating squads into Manila and more harmless explosions, Marcos and the Indonesian Defense Minister met to confer on "internal subversion." "We are playing and toying wtih democracy,"

If Marcos was vague about internal reform, he was very specific about new concessions to Americans and the consequences to Washington if it did not support him.

Marcos told the press regarding the talks. "We need a blood bath," the *New York Times*' Manila reporter quoted one of Marcos' prominent Senators. On September 12th Marcos told the press that the military "feels it could be easier for them to meet this threat if they can utilize some kind of authority other than ordinarily authorized . . . and we are studying the matter." The next day Aquino publicly revealed that Marcos had drawn up but not yet signed a plan to place greater Manila and twelve cities under military control. Three days later Marcos accused Aquino of having conspired with the head of the Maoists, José Maria Sison, to form a united front. Amidst rising protests and more convenient bombings, on September 21st, according to an undenied report in the *San Francisco Examiner*, Marcos and U.S. Ambassador Byroade met for two hours and "Marcos promised to protect a $1 billion American economic stake in the Philippines in return for a tacit U.S. approval of his declaration of martial law." The next day Marcos signed all the necessary documents, citing an alleged ambush against his Defense Minister—in which no one was scratched or apprehended—as the ostensible excuse. At the end of November, however, Marcos publicly claimed that God himself had given him signs to take the fateful step.

Marcos Rides a Tiger

Marcos' proclamation of martial law on September 22 reflects the contradictions in Philippines society as well as the issue of convenient falsehoods regarding the danger of the Maoists which became his main staple after 1969. It immediately became apparent that Marcos would be no ordinary dictator. Twice Marcos insisted "this is not a military takeover," and that martial law was sanctioned in the constitution. But "a state of rebellion exists in the Philippines," and he would arrest "those directly involved in the conspiracy." Though he made some reference to crime and corruption, as well as the need to "reform the social, economic and political institutions in our country," the thrust of Marcos'

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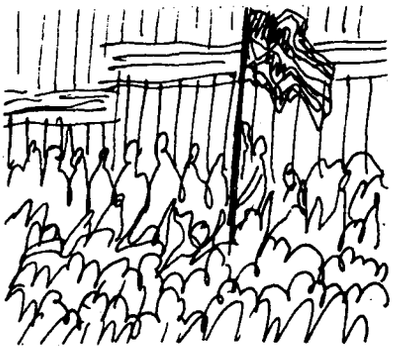
statement dealt with the alleged 10,000 regulars and guerrillas of the NPA and their mushrooming growth over the past year.

Marcos' first action was to close the press and radio save for the small sector of it he owned or controlled, suspend the high schools and universities, and systematically arrest the mainly nationalist opposition. Aquino, Ramon Mitra, Liberal floor leader in the Senate, and Senator José Diokno were among the first mentioned, but soon the leading editors, publishers, and journalists of the largest dailies, the *Manila Times* and *Manila Chronicle*, as well as the major nationalist weeklies, were also known to be in prison camps that Marcos filled with leading Liberal party members and nationalists of every tendency among at least 8,000 rounded up. At the beginning of December nearly 100 of these personalities, including Mitra, were released but kept under military supervision. Tight censorship has been imposed on all the media. The police caught relatively few of those in any faction of the organized Left, for they were not the primary objective of the repression.

In terms of political changes, Marcos immediately solved the question of his having to leave office at the end of 1973 by introducing an amendment in the new constitution, and he will have "legal" authority to stay on for as long as he desires after the constitution is ratified by a rigged referendum January 15th. Making much of private arms and crime in the streets, his forces rounded up thousands of guns and quickly lowered the high crime and personal violence which prevails quite naturally in a sea of poverty.

Apart from petty puritanism regarding sexual themes in media, Marcos' "New Society" campaign against corruption among government officials consisted of a purge of the bureaucrats his opponents had managed to appoint during preceding administrations. Foreign journalists noted that the main change was in increasing the power of the military over the political structure in the name of a punctilious constitutionalism, and that, in effect, Marcos was in the contradictory position of "reforming" a society in which since 1965 he had been heavily responsible for the accumulated corruption, nepotism and social-economic chaos he was now decrying.

By the end of October Marcos was forced to admit that "we thought we would be fighting [the Communists] up to the end of October. Thank God, we're not." What had happened to his main justification for martial law? In fact, the NPA may have roughly 1,000 men permanently in the field, but not much more than that. General Ramos at the end of October himself admitted that the alleged 10,000 guerrillas operating with 1,000 NPA regulars fight only occasionally. The "state of rebellion" Marcos cited on September 22 came at a time "when", as he confessed at end of October, "the Communist rebellion could not yet organize a massive frontal attack against the government." The NPA problem, foreign specialists in Manila agreed, was hardly a real threat, and at the end of November Marcos claimed it had been eradicated. After a quite inept assassination attempt against his wife on December 7, he shifted his emphasis to alleged Rightist plots to kill him.



The Maoists are but one current in a much larger movement of opposition to Marcos whose objective potential for important, even revolutionary, changes in Filipino society is far greater than the capacity of the presently organized opposition combined. While the Russians have continued to support Marcos because of his diplomatic and trade overtures toward the U.S.S.R. and past nationalist utterances, commenting publicly on the events since September 22 with admiration, the pro-Soviet Filipino Communists have already largely broken with them and taken a stand for unity against Marcos. These elements will either genuinely transcend the divisions which largely define the world Left elsewhere, and which have been artificially imposed on the theory and conduct of both Communist factions, or they will be destroyed individually.

But today Marcos faces no large armed opposition, and during October he began once more to concoct more allegations of plots to seemingly justify the new order, claiming for the first time that the years-old Moslem insurgency in Mindanao was linked with the NPA. But even as he invented resistance, Marcos' regime embarked on steps to galvanize it in reality, planning the removal of about 50,000 peasants from 120 villages in northeastern Luzon so as to isolate the 500 NPA forces concentrated in that area. Hence the beginning of the repression which is the mobilizing precondition of inevitable mass peasant resistance.

Despite his constant claims to be "obsessed with reform" that had yet to touch the political structure of the Philippines, it became immediately apparent that the new order consisted of an alliance between Marcos' private clique, which has virtually no domestic social base and is dependent on the U.S. for survival and gain, and a military structure that is surely going to appear more durable for America's purposes. Among Marcos' first acts after September 22 were promotions

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for a number of officers, pay increases for all of them, and higher living allowances for the lower ranks. "We mean business and the President means business," Army chief of staff Romeo Espino declared as the main shift in power was to increase the military's strength at the expense of Marcos'. This equation of the authority of the military with that of Marcos exposed a new reality whereby a facade of constitutionalism was being used to mask the military's ascendancy. On November 6, Defense Secretary Juan Enrile gave a prepared speech in which he made plain that "If the situation arises . . . that our civilian sector is unable or unwilling to carry on the job of pushing through the reform program of the President, the military will have no alternative but to take over the job, even if it would involve taking over purely civilian functions."

How serious the military threat is depends largely on how they really view the much more profound developments in the economic sphere, for which martial law and repression were but the means toward a more enduring end. The divisions within their own ranks, should any exist, could prove decisive. Marcos, in any event, is neither a reformer nor predictable, and the corruption they ostensibly decry was Marcos' handiwork. Boxed in by the compounded economic and social results of seven years of his misrule and nationalist opposition, Marcos decided to lean on the military and the U.S. to find a new balance of forces by which to save his fortunes. But while he needs the military to rule now, the latter can do very well without him. The crucial issue is how the U.S. will decide to relate to both these constituencies.

Martial Law and the U.S.

It will remain for future historians to determine the Nixon Administration's role in the days immediately before and after September 22 and precisely how much pushing and pulling occurred on both sides. Suffice it to say, regardless of its role in the genesis of martial law, the U.S. was immediately made its largest beneficiary. Apart from the undenied report of the Marcos-Byroade meeting on September 21, Marcos' executive secretary conveniently arrived in Washington the next day. The State Department a few days later merely disclaimed any foreknowledge of the proclamation, said that it would not interfere with the events and reassured everyone that relations with Manila remained excellent. It surely knew what was to occur before the 21st, and that claim—probably among others—is certainly false.

Marcos, in any event, paid his immediate obeisance to U.S. interests when he called in Tillman Durdin of the *New York Times* and outlined his "economic reforms" in terms entirely reassuring to U.S. investors. He would greatly modify or reverse the August Supreme Court nationalist rulings regarding U.S. property and managerial restraints, grant oil exploration rights on favorable terms, and U.S. economic "relations established by previous contracts" would remain untouched.

Domestically, however, Marcos preferred stressing the theme of land reform, and his media censors cut his pledges to American companies. But even land reform, which much more deeply affected the properties of his nationalist opponents in the traditional oligarchy, has turned out to be largely propaganda to mitigate his more material role in servicing the U.S. The complicated preconditions for an actual transfer of land titles, and the vast cost of generously compensating landlords, quickly evoked universal skepticism as to Marcos' real intentions, recalling the earlier failures of the 1963 agrarian reform laws. Still, during October the U.S. assigned AID advisers, with hints of later U.S. funding, to the land reform project.

If Marcos was vague about internal reform, he was very specific about new concessions to the Americans and the consequences to Washington if it did not support him. The Philippines needed money to save the existing order. "The American government is the leading power in the world. Of necessity, it has a very strong influence on all the sources of help, and it is itself a source of aid. And again I say it is our hope, it is our belief, that the government will understand that there is no other way out of the mess in which the Philippines has fallen. There is absolutely no other way —unless they accept a Vietnam-type solution." "We do not want any Vietnams in the Philippines," he again reminded the Americans publicly on October 9th regarding the most sensitive of all analogies. "If they [U.S.] don't help now, it will be more expensive later," Defense Secretary Enrile said during September. "They have as much stake in our survival as a nation as we have. Things could turn out as badly here as they did in Cuba."

Along with the threats came more bait regarding foreign investment and political stability. On October 3rd Marcos announced a new foreign investment decree aimed mainly at attracting oil and mining capital, but it is also a boon to virtually every sort of foreign investor. A systematic oil service contract law, which would allow Filipino interests such as the Marcos family to share in joint ventures, was established on terms more attractive than those in Indonesia. "Interest in Philippine Islands exploration," *Oil and Gas Journal* reported, "is beginning to perk up." All capital gains and stock transfer taxes were greatly reduced, and the August Supreme Court decisions were virtually scrapped. During October, frequent official statements welcoming foreign capital and the continuation of American bases only warmed the atmosphere. As one U.S. oilman on the scene reported the mood, "Marcos says, 'We'll pass the laws you need—just tell us what you want'."

As a bonus in the non-economic sphere, on October

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In Prospect for '73

WITH THE PERSONNEL of the second Nixon Administration largely complete, what can the concerned American citizen reasonably look for in the months ahead? Much depends on ending the Vietnam war. To what extent will government now seek to hamper the autonomy of radio, TV and the nation's press? What effective measures would remedy the deepening plight of the American city, stem inflation and the waste of resources and roll back the pollution of our waters and the atmosphere? Will the present worldwide crisis of faith continue? And what new challenges will confront the institutional church? These are the sort of issues you can expect *Commonweal* to be examining during the New Year.

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16th three American civilian organizers among the unusually strong GI anti-war movement at Subic and Clark bases were jailed by Marcos police at the request of U.S. Navy officials, and after a week were summarily deported.

Given this encouragement, U.S. businessmen in Manila freely expressed their preference for the new order, but they were less certain it was a durable solution likely to produce a stable long-term investment climate. "The reaction among businessmen is one of cautious optimism," the president of Mobil Oil Philippines admitted. "Something drastic had to be done. If martial law will instill some discipline and solve the law and order problems, the temporary loss of freedom of speech is not important." The Japanese were a bit more reserved: the "reforms" pleased them and they were ready to extend some new but small and restricted commodity loans to the Philippines Central Bank, but the Tokyo Foreign Ministry freely admitted that it was not at all confident that Marcos could win the cooperation of the Filipino people.

Even some U.S. firms were skeptical of Marcos' personal future, much less of his pretensions of being a reformer. His corruption, especially in recently getting Ford to buy land from his family and friends, was noted publicly. The sinking economy, with its inflation, remains a dubious investment risk. The army's role still remained a gnawing doubt, and whether the absence of mass resistance during the first months would continue much longer was also of concern to U.S. investors. Had a maelstrom of profound crisis rather than a "New Society" begun?

In effect, is it too late to save an already terminal social and economic order whose vast problems already have paralyzed society, and which would only squander more money? Marcos' aides in October came up with a four-year development plan which required an astronomical $400 to $500 million a year from official foreign loans and grants, with private investment added to it—sums comparable to existing economic aid to the Thieu regime. Amounts of this magnitude for an administration whose record evokes no confidence are not quickly produced. These questions caused U.S. business—and possibly Washington— to pause before actually providing Marcos the capital his sinking economy needs quickly in vast quantities, and so Marcos embarked on a quite new line in the hope of shaking loose the support he seeks.

On November 9 Marcos added a clause to the draft constitution which allows the next national assembly to decide whether the Laurel-Langley agreement should be continued after it expires in July 1974 or whether the economic nationalist decisions of the Supreme Court ought still to be implemented. His Secretary of Commerce and Industry let it be known that the nationalist course in 1974 might indeed be possible. American

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businessmen on the scene saw it as a shift from the strategy of enticements to one of simultaneous threats, with Marcos by the end of November changing his emphasis whenever it suited his audience's preference. Publicly, Washington remained silent, and while we shall not immediately know everything it has surely done privately, indications will be forthcoming soon enough. For its stakes are vast.

Marcos' most recent departure proves once more that he is an unstable puppet for the U.S., and scarcely a sufficient nationalist for a Filipino people certain to enter the picture eventually. For the U.S., the real danger today is mainly genuine nationalism rather than socialism, with the threat of the Left being conjured up merely to confront a force that is potentially almost as costly insofar as the legacy of American bases and economic privileges is concerned. Hence the Nixon Administration is now on the horns of a dilemma: if it backs Marcos it will further alienate the nationalists and radicalize a portion of them, while the peasants and urban workers will certainly be much more easily mobilized by the various Left groups under the pressure of the economic and social chaos likely to prevail regardless of the amount of support it gives him. It cannot, at the same time, coopt the whole nationalist opposition—though portions of it surely still have a manageable price—because the past months have made the future destiny of the Philippines irreversible. But Washington will not quiescently watch its economic and military position go down the drain after 70-odd years of controlling the Philippines, and so it may very well shift its backing from Marcos to the generals. Apart from their own capacities to rule, which are minimal, or even their ideology and unity, which is a serious question mark, the Philippines army is one of the smallest and poorest in Asia and a weak reed for Washington to lean upon. If Marcos is an extremely uncertain bet to save American control over the Philippines, his successors on the Right are even more unpredictable.

In fact, the U.S. is already played out in the Philippines in terms of indigenous options, which means we are entering a pre-Vietnam situation in which it must again aspire to accomplish with American men what has eluded its local dependents. They are already there, in great part as a hedge against precisely the situation the U.S. now confronts. And that is an invitation to another disaster for the Filipino people and the U.S., one which over time could prove as protracted, costly and horrible as Vietnam. But unlike Vietnam, the magnet of far greater tangible economic and strategic interests almost prejudges the American decisions when the issues are confronted—as inevitably they must be. Today we are on the threshhold of a potentially terrible new crisis in Asia.

FRONTIER JUSTICE

THE SCREEN

Deep in the heart of John Huston's *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean,* there is a scene also to be found in George C. Scott's new film, *Rage*. Indeed, within that scene within each film, the exact same shot occurs. Having conflagrated his nemesis in a cataclysmic holocaust, each film's hero, Avenging Sword, gallops away craggy-faced with the flames of his night's work flickering in the reflection on his sweaty cheek. In Huston's film this galloping flamer is none other than Judge Roy Bean himself (Paul Newman), and the shot suggests Huston's unwillingness to take either history or the movies very seriously anymore. In Scott's film our hero is a less well-known man, a sheep rancher named Dan Logan (none other than George Scott himself), and the shot reflects the superficiality of Scott's admiration for this hero. Huston is playing the scene for laughs, while Scott is playing it straight. The former ought to be the more promising approach; but the fact is, by the time the two films arrive at their common scene, each of them is a burnt-out case.

As in his other recent film, *Fat City*, Huston here

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shows himself a master of the vignette, the bit part and the cameo role. This film contains the all-time star performance to be given by a bear (Bruno), who plays the Judge's sidekick for a few scenes. By putting together some other walk-ons for human actors—Tab Hunter, Stacy Keach and, of course, John Huston—Huston manages a tolerably tall tale about the Judge's administration of the town he founded, Langtry, Texas. *The Life and Times* is one of those new Westerns—along with *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Little Big Man* and *Bad Company*— that doesn't get too put out about violence. As it is committed here, the act of murder is too casual even to be shocking. It's usually so casual that it can only be ludicrous. Out of the many, many dead in this film, there are only two characters we are expected to regret, and one of them is the bear.

There would be nothing wrong with this, if only the film ended when the Judge leaves town after his wife dies in childbirth. Neither Huston nor scriptwriter John Milius had anything left to say beyond this point, but Huston still had some stars left over—Jacqueline Bisset and Ava Gardner—and presumably some money. So the show had to go on. Twenty years pass in the twinkling of a cut, after which the Judge returns to smite the boom town that a crooked lawyer (Roddy McDowall) has made of his beloved Langtry. The Judge we see now is a mere shadow of his former self—a spiritual residue sent back for an encore because the original man the filmmakers had imagined was all used up. Sometimes Huston doesn't know enough to quit when he's ahead.

In *Rage*, Dan Logan is beating a hasty retreat by firelight because he has just blown up a factory, a D.O.D. subcontractor that makes a chemical warfare agent. Some of the company's product has killed Dan's son, thus driving this usually super-patriotic kind of man to commit his very unpatriotic sapper attack in retaliation. The premise for this plot is an incident that occurred near the Army's Dugway Testing Grounds in Montana a few years ago. Ill winds blew poison gas out of the test range and into nearby herds of sheep. In this film's embroidery on that incident, when the gas kills the boy as well, the father takes what revenge he can before he also dies from exposure to the gas.

Like the Judge, Logan believes in simple justice, an eye for an eye; but unlike Huston, Scott, who directs here for the first time, doesn't take a jaundiced view of such a code. Or does he? As director of the film, Scott does seem a bit chary of the role he has chosen to play. Despite the title *Rage*, which suggests a film dealing in moral imperatives, the film's plot is a cop-out, a course of least resistance shaped by a certain moral evasion on the filmmakers' part. Maybe Scott has had more trouble than Logan deciding who is guilty in a case like this. The first man Logan goes after is a health official whose crime is only covering up the death of the boy, not causing it. He's a loathsome man, but hardly an adequate target for Logan's vengeance. For this reason, Scott and his scriptwriters have Logan shoot the man's cat instead of the man himself, diluting the act of revenge to make it more palatable in a situation where the target of revenge seems a questionable one.

Other acts of vengeance seem to have been tampered with and restricted in much the same way. Destroying the factory where the gas was made, instead of the men who made it, is just another version of shooting the health official's cat in lieu of the health official. The illusion of abandon and compulsion in Logan's actions is undone by the calculated manner in which the film substitutes these symbolic victims for the real ones. In an early scene Scott tries to show a little directorial style by using a slow-motion shot of Logan spitting a quid of tobacco juice. But the style and the content don't jibe. The trick being played by the camera doesn't suit the natural man that Logan is supposed to be. Unhappily, Scott's direction is in general given to tricks that run against the grain of the man he portrays.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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JOSEPHINE JACOBSEN

BUSH CHRISTMAS EVE

Nyere, Kenya

In the pictures, the crêche,
the animals were there, but mild.
I have seen the moon in blackness
light the green jelly of Hyena's eye;

seen Crocodile, while something tells
the oldest coldest jest
that keeps its savor,
smiling, listen.

Savior, I never saw you painted
flanked by those eyes, that grin,
I paint you there, tonight.
Well, in any case, Come.

Welcome. I cannot bless
that green, that grin.
You who imagined both, bless
them by coming.

And since I bless
your coming, why, I praise
and bless what you imagined,
with you between them.
Only come.

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RELIGION AND THE COURTS

DANIEL A. DEGNAN

The Supreme Court and Religion
RICHARD E. MORGAN
The Free Press, $7.95

Religious Liberty in the United States
ELWYN A. SMITH
Fortress Press, $10.95

These two books on Church and State set me wondering why I can teach the law of landlord and tenant with some equanimity while the Supreme Court's pronouncements on Church and State often leave me alternately frustrated and resigned. The reason, I think, is that the law of landlord and tenant, unjust though it is to the tenant, can be changed; it does not presume to state once and for all a national consensus. The Supreme Court's decisions on Church and State, however, presume to say what America is all about and they are final and authoritative in a way few things in this world can be.

Richard Morgan's book is an interesting and accurate review of the Supreme Court's decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment, the kind of book long needed in a field dominated by advocacy or by more specialized legal analysis. Anyone who wants to know where the Court has been and seems to be going in Church and State law ought to start with this book. Although Morgan's preface promises to involve the reader at a level of analytical sophistication reached by the law reviews, his concise format does not allow it. Instead his survey shows the strengths and weaknesses of the Supreme Court's approach to Constitutional law in a different way.

How is it, for example, that in 1947, when the establishment clause had hardly been dealt with before by the Court, Justice Black could so confidently say what it meant? (The famous no aid, no tax paragraph.) The trouble with Supreme Court decisions, and derivatively with a review of them such as Morgan's, is that the Constitution appears to be what the judges say it is. Where first there was a text, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," now there are decisions. The Court has decided what the text means and scholarly criticism begins with this.

FATHER DANIEL A. DEGNAN, S.J., *is a Professor of Jurisprudence at Syracuse University Law School.*

It seems strange, for instance, that so careful a scholar as Morgan can be satisfied that the strict Madisonian view of separation is embodied in the first amendment on the flimsy textual and historical evidence he presents. The explanation, I think, is that the decision to treat the first amendment from a Madisonian perspective has already been made by the Supreme Court and so firmly reiterated by it that any other reading seems futile, as Morgan states at one point. This is practice, however, not truth.

Although Morgan offers some useful history, his book is about the Supreme Court's decisions, and here it shows the best and worst sides of the Court's processes. The Court is at its best responding like lawyers to particular cases. In the Mormon polygamy case, the Court had relied on a naive and dangerous distinction between belief and action (the State could regulate action), but faced with the Jehovah's Witnesses' proselytizing, it retreated from the early rule and recognized that actions are connected with religious freedom. In the school prayer and Bible-reading cases, the Court, closer to the situation, led the nation in recognizing that government sponsorship of prayer or holy writ was sponsorship of belief.

The worst of this process on the constitutional level is that the Court has spoken and that, often enough, is that. The judgments have been made, they are supported by the Court's impressive argument and the impression is of an inevitable, irresistible and true interpretation of the first amendment. That is the trouble with Morgan's book. One would hardly know that thoughtful constitutional law scholars have found some of the Court's rulings in Church and State simplistic and mistaken and that these criticisms persist. Morgan does offer a concluding chapter of criticism, but it is too brief and too late. Morgan knows the field and I wish he had taken enough space to offer the necessary counterbalance to the overwhelming authority of the Supreme Court.

It was Mark de Wolfe Howe's thesis that the Supreme Court had rewritten America's history in this area, and Father John Courtney Murray's that the Court had erected a theological doctrine into constitutional law. For Howe the Court wrongly interpreted the history and purpose of the first amendment as embodying a Jeffersonian rationalism and aversion to religion. For Murray, a doctrine identifying the Church solely with the individual conscience and refusing any role to the Church as the society and sacrament of the faithful had been adopted by the Court. To this day the Supreme Court and the nation have hardly understood the import of these charges, and this is why Elwyn Smith's study is so welcome.

Smith offers an intellectual history of representative thought on Church and State in America, divided into three parts: the separatist tradition, the Catholic tradition and the constitutional tradition (the Supreme Court). Although Smith's more theological essays offer insufficient background for the reader, his best and clearest chapters are interesting and balanced accounts of the struggle for disestab-

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lishment led by Madison and Jefferson; and the story of the Catholic struggle, begun a half-century later and still continuing, to obtain governmental aid to the Catholic schools. Both accounts show how much the disputants' theological presuppositions were woven into the conflicts.

In Virginia, Madison's and Jefferson's rationalist arguments for disestablishing the Episcopal Church were married temporarily with a Baptist theology of Church and State and both types of argument seemed to be supported by the Presbyterians, although inconsistent with basic Presbyterian belief. The upshot was that all parties united in stating that religion was solely an affair of the individual conscience and therefore was no business of the State. "No institution, not even a Church, could give religion its shape," to quote Smith.

Similarly, when, a half-century later, Catholics began to press for aid to Catholic schools, the response was a mix that included support for the common religion taught in the public schools, hatred or distrust of Catholicism, and an assimilationist ideal of public education. Again, however, a consensus argument identified religion with the individual conscience, however inconsistent this might be with non-evangelical Protestant thought. As Smith says:

> The sum of the matter is that the American commitment to liberty required that all tolerated religions should teach the radical individuality and autonomy of conscience. . . . It occurred to none but Catholics to identify this as a doctrine of religion.

In the late nineteenth century, this mix was translated into the adoption of "Blaine amendments" by most of the States, forbidding aid, direct or indirect, to sectarian schools.

Anyone reading this history might begin to suspect that Howe and Murray have a point. A legal institution such as disestablishment in Virginia or the denial of public support to sectarian schools can be distinguished, of course, from the theological arguments made for it; but this seems rarely to have happened. One might wonder, then, how much the Supreme Court's own opinions reflect theological presuppositions. Unfortunately, this is where Smith's book fails.

Despite the intellectual history that went before it, Smith's description of the Supreme Court's decisions is almost devoid of interpretation or analysis. Sounding like any lawyer, Smith seems satisfied that the Supreme Court, although its high and rigid wall of separation was once dangerously close to hostility to religion, has moved to a principle of benevolent neutrality. The former wall has become a more flexible "line" of separation, a line that embraces military chaplaincies and tax exemptions, but stops at any form of aid to Church-related (Catholic) schools.

Out of the disparate theological elements of the separatist tradition, the Court, quite fortunately in Smith's view, has adopted a moderate Protestant position. The Supreme Court, after all, could hardly have adopted the Catholic tradition.

To Smith, and perhaps to the Supreme Court itself, there was nothing for it but to adopt one or another of the secular or sectarian positions—those closest to the democratic ideal of liberty—and then to make the necessary adjustments when the whole business of separation seemed to threaten the people's freedom to practice their religion.

There is, however, another tradition, a political one, which maintains that the political realm is quite distinct from the religious, so that legal institutions, even the separation of Church and State, need not be identified with a given theology or rationalist dogma. This requires careful distinctions, since the State, after all, must take some view of the Church in order to guarantee the Church's freedom, and since moral and religious principles do operate at the base of civil society. This political tradition, however, holds that State and Church have different ends, and so the State is able to recognize the freedom of different faiths without choosing among their beliefs.

If this tradition had been more attended to, it is possible that the Supreme Court's decisions interpreting the first amendment would still have been the same in result. One would have been relieved, however, of the impression that the Churches in America are something of a menace to freedom, to be approached by secular government with great suspicion, if at all. This kind of thinking, with which the Supreme Court has been burdened since 1947, seems false both to our history and to our present understanding of ourselves.

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FREDERICK MORGAN

PAIN POEM

In last extremities of pain and fear
when you are all alone with nothingness
and clench your teeth on it and taste despair,
if you remember this is each man's fate
and God's fate, too, as far as we are he,
and let your inner substance rest on it
and merge with it, as with a summer sea—
then comes the Change. You have become the pain
and all at once attained the further shore,
This is the meaning of the Crucified:
not to adore your pain but feel through it
until you reach the country that's beyond,
where you may touch the liberated One
eternally rejoicing to be found.

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BOOKS

The essence of an American tragedy

The Best and the Brightest

DAVID HALBERSTAM

Random House, $10

QUINCY HOWE

David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* recaptures, recreates, and preserves in book form the living essence of the American tragedy in Vietnam. During the past ten years, journalistic assignments have taken the author from the Congo to Vietnam to Poland and back to Vietnam again. There, in 1969, he embarked on a series of interviews with people, primarily from the second to the fourth tiers of the United States Government—plus a very few at the very top—whom he considered knowledgeable about the men, events, and decisions in Vietnam under the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. More than two and half years and more than four hundred interviews later, the journalist had transformed himself into the historian who, in turn, embodied the tale he had to tell. The medium became the message, as David Halberstam wrought from the raw material of these interviews a compelling sequence of character sketches, political essays, quotations, and observations that he blended into a single, smooth narrative.

The story begins at Washington in December, 1960, when President-elect Kennedy invited Robert A. Lovett, old friend and trusted collaborator of General Marshall and Colonel Stimson, to head either the State or the Defense Department in the next Administration. Pleading illness, Lovett declined the invitation only to follow through with a counter-proposal. Speaking and acting for the innermost circle of the almighty—if invisible—eastern seaboard Establishment, Lovett had only to let fall the names of Dean Rusk and Robert MacNamara in connection with the two posts and that was that. Harking back to the turn of the century, Halberstam notes: "If the torch had been passed in earlier years to Elihu Root and Theodore Roosevelt, and then to Stimson and Marshall, by 1960 Lovett was next."

The torch to which Halberstam referred had been lit in 1890 with the publication of Admiral Alfred T. Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power upon History* which became the strategic bible of Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Hay and the other Republican architects of America's expansionist Far Eastern policy before, during, and after the Spanish-American War. Franklin Roosevelt, in due course, also fell under Mahan's spell, but never, since Theodore Roosevelt's time, had any Administration—Republican or Democratic—come so close to approximating the manifest destiny doctrines first preached by Admiral Mahan as did President Kennedy and his New Frontiersmen. It was not that the New Frontiersmen had themselves become the disciples of Admiral Mahan. Rather had two world wars and their aftermath created in southeast Asia a state of affairs that virtually invited the American application of the Mahan sea-power strategy with the added clout that air power can now provide.

But David Halberstam, having decided to focus his interviewing on American decision-making in Vietnam, could not permit America's manifest destiny in the far Pacific and southeast Asia to distract him from the task at hand. For he has developed his own theme in such detail and depth that the reader can—and, indeed, must—use *The Best and the Brightest* as the measure of this decision-making rather than measure the book on the basis of how closely it conforms to the reader's opinions in certain related fields. Because the book has few villains and no heroes, the problem hardly arises. Indeed, the author's appraisals of the Bundy brothers, Robert MacNamara, Dean Rusk, General Maxwell Taylor, and even President Kennedy owe as much of their bite to his instinctive sympathy for their ambitions as to his intellectual distaste for the ways in which they chose to realize them.

To this reader, in any event, *The Best and the Brightest* presents the Kennedy years of the Vietnam War as a tragedy of character and the Johnson years as a tragedy of fate. Kennedy did not inherit the war from Eisenhower as Johnson inherited it from Kennedy. To Kennedy Vietnam at first presented an opportunity to compensate for the Bay of Pigs fiasco; later it became an opportunity to improve on the image that he had established for himself during the Cuban missile crisis. To Johnson, on the other hand, Vietnam always remained the agonizing nemesis of his Great Society.

Of course, the war filled more of the Johnson years than it filled of the Kennedy years and it also fills more of the Halberstam book. But the Kennedy decisions dictated most of the Johnson decisions and the Kennedy years emerge as the decisive years. As Halberstam himself puts it: "If the Kennedy Administration had come to power to be the rationalizers of the great new Democratic empire, then they had found the perfect general [Maxwell Taylor]; their social and academic hubris was matched by his military self-confidence. His were not the attitudes of a man about to be deterred from his path by a little peasant revolutionary army. Not in the American century."

Some of Halberstam's observations deserve quotations; more invite summation. Concerning the Kennedy years, when Ho Chi Minh ruled at Hanoi

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and Ngo Dinh Diem at Saigon, Halberstam writes: "The North was ruled by a man who had expelled the foreigners, the South by a man who had been installed by the foreigners." Of the top American officials at Saigon in October, 1943 he says: "A lie had become a truth and the policy-makers were caught in it; their policy was a failure and they could not admit it." Robert MacNamara had ignored the basic political rule: "Stay in with the outs." General Taylor mistook Vietnam for Korea. The U.S. Army had sound views on the limits of air power in guerrilla warfare; the U.S. Air Force had sound views on the limits of ground troops against guerrillas. Johnson was so keen on his Great Society that he lied about American troop strength in Vietnam and refused to impose wage and price controls. McGeorge Bundy refused to assume that North Vietnam might escalate the war because, "We can't assume what we do not believe." When President Johnson first escalated the war he wanted to be identified with the generals; by 1965, the last thing he wanted was to appear to be under their influence. He stood in awe of the eastern seaboard, of Harvard, of the Kennedys. His greatest weakness lay in his gnawing suspicion that his self-doubts were justified. If only President Kennedy and his New Frontiersmen—not to mention Bob Lovett and his fellow Establishmentarians—had permitted themselves to think such thoughts. But then David Halberstam could probably never have written this book and certainly could never have given it a title which events are turning from mild irony to outright sarcasm with every passing day.

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REVIEWERS

QUINCY HOWE, a distinguished radio commentator for many years, is the author of the recently published *Ashes of Victory* (Simon & Schuster).

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The Sunlight Dialogues

JOHN GARDNER

Knopf, $8.95

MICHAEL MURRAY

We have recently taken to describing the violence that surrounds us as "senseless": the fatal shooting of a kindly candystore-owner or whistling bootblack is "senseless murder," frightening because inexplicable. When we see that the person attacked was obviously wealthy, that the political assassin was ideologically motivated, that the mass murderer was certifiably psychotic, then crime is "sensible" and there is still order and coherence in the universe; each effect has a reasonable cause. What we can't tolerate is random violence, the prospect of walking down the street and being done in for no damn reason at all. If all else fails, we fall back unhappily on the notion that this is a violent country, that some brutal force in the national character just erupts unpredictably from time to time, often from the most surprising quarters ("He was the nicest boy on the block. Always said, 'Yes ma'am,' and held the door for you.") But this leads to the awful thought that evil is part of us, that it has no special explanation.

Two years ago, John Gardner tackled the problem of evil head-on in his brilliant fable, *Grendel*—the Beowulf story from the monster's point of view. At one point in this book, a wise dragon instructs the monster about his relationship to men: "You improve them, my boy! . . . You stimulate them! You make them think and scheme. You drive them to poetry, science, religion, all that makes them what they are for as long as they last. You are, so to speak, the brute existent by which they learn to define themselves. . . . You *are* mankind, or man's condition: inseparable as the mountain-climber and the mountain."

In further pursuit of this theme, Gardner has turned in his new novel to our specifically American brutality and to some of the deeper implications of "law and order." The locale is small-town America, Batavia, N.Y. (next door to Attica), a community with a rural outlook, old family traditions, unlocked front doors and a few neighborly policemen looking down peaceful streets. Into this serene landscape comes a monster known as "The Sunlight Man" who is apparently responsible for a wave of senseless violence which terrorizes the villagers. On his trail is the plodding but thoughtful Chief of Police, Fred Clumly. "We're in an age of violent change," says Clumly, and he has an unfocused suspicion that if he can understand The Sunlght Man he will understand what has happened to America.

This monster, like Grendel, *is* the community in some sense. In this case, he is a member of Batavia's proudest family, the Hodges, a family which has now cracked apart but which helped establish the very structure that Clumly is trying to preserve. Taggart Hodge had run away years before, traumatized by the tragedy of the his wife's insanity, his sons' deaths, his in-laws' duplicity and the smug deceits of American life. He returns now, disfigured by burns, embittered, perhaps mad himself, a trained magician, probably a murderer, a wildly eclectic philosopher, a devotee of occult mysteries and ancient languages, to do—he knows not what—perhaps to declare the absurdity of all human connections and relationships, the meaninglessness of all of society's structures, the irrelevance of law and order. So the dogged lawman confronts him, fascinated, knight vs. monster, in a series of "dialogues," and they lock together metaphysically like Ahab and the whale.

The novel is ambitious to a fault—a quite serious fault. The themes are huge (the book itself is huge); the reader hears the awesome rumble of some of the most profound concerns of our time, like thunder at a distance. It remains, however, at a distance. The author has found no concrete, artistic center to the work with which to hold the themes together and bring the storm howling around our heads—no narrative momentum and no central

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characters compelling enough, as human beings, to keep the pages turning. The book is certainly some kind of achievement, as the early reviews have claimed; it contains many levels and mystifications and would doubtless repay careful analysis of revealing surprising twists and juxtapositions buried beneath the surface. Unfortunately, it is a chore to *read*.

This is unfortunate because Gardner has started out very much in the right direction. On a realistic level, the book is about the demise of the Hodge family and so it taps a particularly rich American vein (one that seems close to the surface these days): the loss of the old strength and innocence, the sad belittling of great promise as the generations unfold. Arthur Hodge, the patriarch, was a Congressman, a legendary and beloved man of the people; Batavia and its way of life were built to his design. But his children and grandchildren are petty non-entities, sweet fools or madmen. The yearning among the younger generations for the old dignity hangs on, however—the feeling, shared by the whole town, that the old forms should be respected and maintained, even though the center of the design is now a ludicrous time-study technician of a mayor. At the same time, everyone has a vague feeling that something has gone wrong, that the gates of the city have been left open and the monster has found his way in.

The author is at home in the small-town atmosphere, and many of the peripheral characters are well-drawn. The women come off particularly well, perhaps because they carry no more weight than their own humanity: Esther, Clumly's blind wife who is sorrowfully driven to betray her husband; Millie, the divorced wife of Will Hodge, whose intelligence and sensitivity turn sour in this alien climate.

The author is also, however, a teacher of Old and Middle English, and he is clearly playing with old forms and employing ancient devices for symbolic purposes, most of which seem confusing or precious to the uninitiated reader. (Sample chapter heading: "Winged Figure Carrying Sacrificial Animal.") Even more damaging is the fact that the author is a philosopher-artist who sees explicit, rational meanings in the patterns of human behavior, whose characters often seem to act because the scheme of the book requires it, and whose idea of a good scene is to have the characters debate the *issues* which are exemplified by their behavior. Thus the long abstract "dialogues" between the two central characters: stability vs. change, science vs. mystery, responsibility vs. freedom, and so on, all complex, often vitally pertinent to modern problems, but not, baldly stated like this, the fabric of fiction. We cannot believe that Clumly can think in these terms, and The Sunlight Man must act like a self-contradicting maniac to hold up his end.

The failure of these two characters necessarily dooms the work, whatever its symbolic levels and metaphysical explorations. The Sunlight Man is a bore. Is his violence a demonstration of existential principles or the result of recognizable human motivation? He himself doesn't seem to know, and he is so incomprehensibly unpredictable and yet relentlessly wordy that we tune him out before he has gotten warmed up. Clumly too, although more human, is engaged in a quest toward an abstract: he feels the responsibility of representing his people against some large anarchic force, but he cannot pin it down—perhaps because it is forever an idea and a symbol. "It ever occur to you that a cop's just like a philosopher, Kozlowski?" he asks one of his men. "No," says Kozlowski. Right on.

In *Grendel*, Mr. Gardner wrote economically (152 pages), gracefully, and within a format perfectly designed for his talent. Dragons and monsters were carefully, if fancifully, characterized, yet they could all emit bestial growls at one moment and discourse like Bertrand Russell the next and the read-

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er was charmed by the virtuoso effect. In the world of men in upstate New York, what might have been fascinating from the mouth of a dragon is ponderous and pretentious from humdrum lawyers and farmers, especially over a span of nearly 700 pages; it is more *By Love Possessed* than *Moby Dick*. Mr. Gardner's dazzling metaphysical insights and symbols have led him unfortunately to a dull work of fiction.

The Poetic Jesus

ANDREW YOUNG

Harper & Row, $3.95

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Harper & Row, $6.95

MARK TAYLOR

The Poetic Jesus is a critical biography, the story of a life together with a commentary on the work. Selecting his material mainly from the first three Gospels, the author so organizes it as to present a straightforward, readable account of the life of Jesus. He supplements the main emphases of the New Testament with a historical perspective that sets Jesus squarely in the rabbinical tradition: Jesus began studying the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament; he went on to develop a general interest in the Coming Kingdom; and only gradually, and with some resistance to the idea, did he perceive his own identity as Messiah. Finally, Young, a former minister of the Church of Scotland, explains in a reasonably ecumenical way those obscurities of phrase or parable that necessarily remain after editing, and he tries always to demonstrate what he calls the poetical character of Jesus' teaching.

Unfortunately, the book falls into a no man's land of biblical interpretation. Someone who knows the Bible well won't need a rearrangement, however skillful, of its story, and someone who does not know the Bible well will be badly misled by some of Young's statements. His book does not pretend to be a work of scholarship, an entry in the higher criticism sweepstakes, but it nevertheless contains unallowable errors of fact and inference. Young writes, for example, that a certain verse in Luke "has been changed by St. Matthew" into something else, implying that the author of Matthew had seen the book of Luke. Matters of chronology and influence within the Gospels are very complicated and uncertain, but the general informed belief holds that Matthew and Luke are entirely independent of each other, though both draw on Mark and the hypothetical "Q" source. Elsewhere, Young designates Barabbas "a false Messiah," quite a different order of man from the prisoner, robber, murderer, and insurrectionary of whom the Bible variously speaks. More disturbing still is the attribution to Jesus of words that he never spoke. Young points rightly to Jesus' recitation in Luke 4 of a passage from Isaiah 61; whereas Jesus simply discontinues his quotation after one verse, Young has him delete an unpleasant phrase about the "vengeance of our God" and then go on with the received text. It never happened.

The controlling thesis that Jesus was a poet, a highly attractive idea, receives the most naive, even sophomoric support. Although Young is brilliantly perceptive, two or three times, in describing the *irony* with which Jesus spoke to his disciples, he usually lets his case for poetry rest on such unsubstantial and trivial observations as these: a statement is "rich in poetry"; one remark is "more poetical" than another; a "saying . . . is very poetical"; something shows "the poetical way he described his experience"; something is Jesus' "poetical way of describing" something else; Jesus said such and such "in his poetic way"; and so on. We conclude from all this that poetical ways of speaking are good ways of speaking—that Young does not agree with Plato that poetry lies and appeals to the baser parts of the soul—but most of us would concur with that proposition in the first place. The use of "poetic" merely as an approbative adjective, while failing to illuminate the character of Jesus' discourse, debases the word itself. One thinks of the sentimental sublimity attained by the adolescent who calls the moonlight "poetry." Attempts to examine Jesus' language without the aid of "poetic" and "poetry" are often worse still. "He spoke little of himself," Young writes, unless his publisher misrepresents him, "leaving his words to speak for him." Good grief!

The problem, paradoxically, is not that Young is wrong but that he is right—insofar as he insists on the presence of poetry in what Jesus says. Religious language, generally, shares a common identity with poetic language; in their attempts to be what they define, both are less descriptive than affective, supra-rational, phatic. Both, to use terms of Francis Berry's, are agential, not instrumental: they are their own ends and not the unimportant means to a different end (such as the satisfactory communication of a "message"). As agent, language ideally seeks the obliteration of the external, accidental world; as instrument, it ideally seeks the obliteration of itself. I know of two books, one in English, the other in French, named *Poetry and Prayer*—a title that recognizes the point where the two words intersect.

Thus, a real study of Jesus as poet would be extraordinarily valuable, but it would need to investigate the nature of poetry as well as the structure of Jesus' discourse. If successful, this study would increase our appreciation of the poets in Anthony Mercatante's splendid anthology, which ranges over

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nineteen hundred years and selects from among half a dozen literatures, for it would invite us to see these figures responding to Jesus as a poet—rather more, of course, than *primus inter pares* in the community of Christian artists—and not only as a source of doctrine. After all, John Milton's famous statement that Spenser is a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas means, fundamentally, that a poet offers a more congenial model than a philosopher for another poet to imitate. For that very reason, we should indeed like to understand the poetic Jesus.

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

inology of class. But the realities to which it points are inescapable. Father Hesburgh recently commented that the busing issue was a number-one phony issue. But he and other civil rights leaders made it so. They turned support for busing into a kind of loyalty test of liberalism. From the very beginning they should have minimized the issue—come out against busing except in rare, exceptional circumstances. For, in fact, as Father Hesburgh went on to say, less than 2 percent of all school busing in America is for purposes of racial balance. We could probably pass a law *forbidding* any more than 3 percent of all school busing to be for purposes of racial integration, and still fulfill our needs in that respect. So why did the left make it an issue? Why didn't it long ago *condemn* busing, except in the extraordinary circumstance?

But if the ordinary citizen watched television these last four years, he saw busing incidents on the evening news time after time after time. The broadcasters were carrying their civil rights crusade — "enlightening" the public—into every neighborhood. It felt like a universal program. If in *that* town today, why not here tomorrow? That's the way liberals argue about even a single civil liberties case.

Well, one reason people work very hard, and deny themselves many luxuries, is to move into a neighborhood where there is a better school for their children; or else to keep up their own neighborhood against all the normal erosions of modern cities, including unregulated ethnic and racial migrations. Status in America comes from the quality of a neighborhood, not least from the quality of its schools. People stake their lives upon such interests. To go against such interests by compulsion is to undercut the class structure of American life. It is to violate the unwritten law. No wonder people react with outrage. It is naïveté to call busing a phony issue. It is as real and jugular as you can get.

But the left always wants it both ways: To be more moral than thou in proposing and defending busing as a loyalty test on civil rights, and then to be more moral than thou in saying busing is insignificant and your fears are irrational.

From which I conclude that the future aims of the democratic center must be worked out in terms of class as well as in ethnic terms. Affluent radicals may feel as though they belong to an oppressor class, but all those citizens living side by side in little square houses in Queens, Kensington, Parma and Warren do not feel like oppressors. In their lives are all the evils to which humans are prey—ugly feelings, resentments, greed, corruptibility —but also there is a beauty to be enhanced, a wealth of spiritual resources to be tapped, a generosity to channel, a political passion to lead forward.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 315)

portant relationship between sexual control and authority in the Catholic church. The structure and command system of the church as we know it depends to a large extent on tight sexual mandates and sanctions. For example, the ruling groups are characterized by celibacy. Also, much of the laity's conscience adherence to the church has revolved around issues of strict sexual observance regarding contraception and other sexual matters that traditionally made up the weighty items for confession. If the church moves to looser guidelines on these questions, it will not mean a new golden age of renewal. But it is quite clear to me (and to the conservatives who hold the reins today) that the structure and authority network of Catholicism would change drastically if the church let up on sexual control.

EUGENE C. BIANCHI

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